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SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Thompson. Senator Suttle, on the motion to reconsider AM1505.

SENATOR SUTTLE: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature. There's been talk about the articles in the Journal Star over the last week and what our caseworkers have to go through. They do unbelievably wonderful work. They are overworked, underpaid. I think the average salary is about \$27,000 a year. They have awesome responsibilities. They have awesome tasks to do. I think that it ought to be read into the record some of the things that they do. They find foster homes for kids. They find therapists for parents. They devise plans for the courts. They counsel and cajole, always on the go to psychiatric units, schools, homes, courthouses. They drive state cars so angry parents or vengeful teens won't recognize them in their own cars. Most of them keep unlisted phone numbers. They weather death threats, cantankerous computers. Oh, my, what stories, Senator Jensen, you and I can tell about Health and Human Services' cantankerous computers. The computers in Health and Human Services are legendary. Are we going to put these kids under a computer system that doesn't work a lot of the time? We lose foster kids. What makes us think we won't lose juvenile offenders? We lose them now. We find them dead under bridges. They run away from Kearney. They run away from Geneva and we find them dead. I can't tell you that this system doesn't need fixing. It does. But is this the right fix? And for the Governor to threaten taking \$10 million away from the juvenile justice system because he doesn't get his way is fighting dirty. I think that we need to look carefully before we leap into the fray. To continue with the article, they weather death threats, caseloads twice the ideal. That's what our caseworkers need are more cases. They walk into homes reeking of feces, snapping rubber bands around their pant legs to keep the roaches from crawling up inside. They see the bruises and the hurt. There's is a job filled with awesome responsibility, and they perform it for less than garbage collectors get. Apparently that's what kids are in this state, just pieces of garbage. Let's do something cheap and get them out of our hair and we'll do it the best way we can at the cheapest way and we won't look at it carefully. I am concerned